REMARKS

Claims 1-22 and 25 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 23 and 24 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in those claims. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Choudhury during the November 8, 2006 personal interview, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over "Implementation of a workflow-based web application with an electronic signature mechanism," by Kim et al. (hereinafter "Kim"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding claims 1 and 10, the Office Action asserts that Kim teaches a method for transmitting workflow-enabled electronic mail messages from a user of a workflow system to a recipient, in which the recipient does not have access to the workflow system. This assertion is incorrect for at least the following reasons.

The recipients of Kim have access to the workflow system. The Office Action, on page 8, concedes that Kim does not explicitly recite that the recipient does not have access to the workflow system prior to receipt of the e-mail, but notes that Kim teaches that only authenticated users can access the documents. The Office Action relies on Official Notice to assert that, therefore, "means are present within Kim's design for creating an email to the recipient who does not have access to a workflow system." The Office Action's reasoning is based on the erroneous interpretation that having access to the workflow system is the same as access to an associated process of the workflow system. These access capabilities are separately claimed in claims 1 and 10. The recipients in Kim have access to the workflow

system since they are registered users of the given Virtual Private Network (VPN) (see page 2, left column, line 3; page 2, right column, last paragraph; page 3, left column, last paragraph; page 4, left column, last two paragraphs; page 4, right column, third paragraph). Further, evidence of this is demonstrated by Kim's electronic signature mechanism. Each of the three signature submodules, described on page 4, restricts access based on the unique e-mail addresses and passwords of the users.

As such, Kim does not teach, nor can it reasonably be considered to have suggested, the feature of creating an e-mail message to the recipient by the user, the recipient who does not have access to the workflow system, as is positively recited in independent claims 1 and 10. This argument was presented to the Examiner during the November 8 personal interview. Agreement was not reached regarding whether Kim taught, or could reasonably be considered to have suggested, this feature.

Additionally, Kim does not teach sending the e-mail message having a link to the determined network address to the recipient, wherein the link provides the recipient with access to the associated process of the workflow system, as is also recited in claims 1 and 10. Specifically, access to the associated process of the workflow system in Kim is not gained via a link to the determined network address. Rather, the process of Kim first authenticates a user via a unique e-mail address and password and, in certain instances, incorporates a random key within the e-mail, for authentication purposes, along with the URL that is the location of the document in the system. In other words, Kim requires a user authentication based on a registered unique e-mail address, and additional random key information, separate from URL, to provide access to the associated process of the workflow system.

This analysis also applies to claim 21. In regard to this claim, the Office Action also suggests that selecting a link to access the network address provides access to the workflow

process. For the reasons previously discussed regarding claim 1, this assertion necessarily fails.

With regard to claims 4, 5, 13 and 14, the Office Action asserts that Kim teaches randomly or pseudo-randomly generating the network address. This assertion is incorrect. Kim does not address the relevant network addresses being generated. The section upon which the Office Action relies merely states that a linked URL, which is the location of the document in the system, is included in an e-mail. The Office Action goes on to refer to a section in Kim that deals with generating an electronic signature key as teaching the generation of network address. This assertion is also incorrect. The generating of the electronic signature key described in Kim does not correspond to generating a network address.

This argument was discussed with the Examiner during the November 8 personal interview. The Examiner conceded that Kim did not explicitly teach randomly or pseudo-randomly generating the network address. Agreement was not reached whether Kim could reasonably be considered to have suggested such a feature.

Regarding claims 8, 9, 19 and 20, the Office Action concedes that Kim does not teach embedding multiple links within a single e-mail. The Office Action relies on Official Notice that is well known in the art that a plurality of links can be embedded in an e-mail for the purpose of sending multiple links without using multiple messages. However, as detailed in the previous Amendment, such a modification of Kim would impermissibly alter Kim's method of operation and render it unsuitable for its intended purpose. Specifically, Kim teaches sending decision makers individual e-mails, specific to certain documents, with individual random keys. As such, careful control of the sequence of approval is achieved (see section 3.3 of Kim). Incorporating multiple links to various stages of the workflow process of

Kim, with all of the corresponding random keys required by Kim, would defeat this purpose, rendering the invention of Kim unsuitable for its intended purpose.

Regarding claim 25, the Office Action asserts that Kim teaches excluding generating network addresses that have been embedded in previous e-mail messages created by the system that have not yet been accessed. The Office Action relies on page 2, second column, lines 25-40 of Kim as teaching such a feature. However, this section of Kim does not teach, nor can it reasonably be considered to have suggested, determining whether particular network addresses have been accessed.

This argument was discussed during the November 8 personal interview. The Examiner did not rebut Applicants' assertion that Kim failed to teach this feature.

For at least these reasons, the prior art reference cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or to have reasonably suggested, the combinations of all of the features positively recited in independent claims 1, 10 and 21. Additionally, claims 2-9, 11-20, 22 and 25 are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by the applied prior art reference for at least the respective dependence of these claims directly or indirectly on independent claims 1 and 10, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recite.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-22 and 25 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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